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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 000787

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA, WHA/PD, WHA/CCA, WHA/PPC, AND WHA/CEN
STATE FOR DRL, DRL/MLA, IO, INR, AND IIP/G/WHA

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON UNCHR RESOLUTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
IN CUBA, APRIL 2, 2004

1. Editorial in Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Herald" on 3/31 entitled "Let it not be true". "We hope that the claims of the Cuban government that Honduras has been designated by the U.S. to table a resolution to condemn Cuba for human rights violations isn't true. We hope the Honduran government doesn't do the dirty work that no one else wants to do."

"It isn't just about the appreciation of Hondurans for the disinterested solidarity we've received from Cuba. It's just not fair that Honduras should be exposed once again to the international community as a servant of the U.S. We've already done too much by sending our troops to occupy Iraq with our own money, while we're still living in so much poverty."

"No Honduran would want to see our Ambassador in Geneva acting as an aggressor for hire. We've already gone through so much embarrassment in the past, as a result of the submissiveness of our authorities to the great empire."

2. Editorial in San Pedro Sula-based liberal daily "Tiempo" on 4/1 entitled "Rumors". "There is a rumor that the U.S. government has requested that Honduras sponsor a resolution condemning Cuba in the upcoming meeting of the U.N. Commission for Human Rights. Up to this moment, the Honduran government hasn't said anything on this matter, neither has the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa, but we feel something will happen shortly."

"We don't think the government of President Maduro and the Nationalist Party will be able to undertake such a dishonorable task, no matter how valid or legitimate the grounds of that resolution might be. We believe there are limits to which a country like Honduras can serve the U.S. interests. We still think Hondurans have the highest sense of patriotism, dignity, and honor."

Note: President Maduro's nationally televised press conference was broadcasted on March 31 at night after the news cycle had ended and the paper had been sent for printing and distribution. End note.

Palmer